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EXDIS-DOD HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. WAR SCARE IN THE ANDES

A. PERU: A SOMBER VIEW OF THE CHANCE OF WAR

EMBASSY LIMA SUGGESTS THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS DICTATE INCREASED USG ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRADITIONAL HOSTILITY BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE, THE INCIPIENT ARMS RACE IN SOUTH AMERICA, INCREASED TENSIONS BETWEEN PERU AND ECUADOR, AND--BASIC TO ALL OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS--THE REAL INTENTIONS OF THE PERUVIAN MILITARY ELITE TOWARD NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY:

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--THE THREAT OF WAR HAS INCREASED SOMEWHAT SINCE THE EMBASSY'S LAST ASSESSMENT.

--DESPITE INTERNAL DIVERGENCE OF OPINION ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF A PRE-EMPTIVE PERUVIAN ATTACK ON CHILE

AND/OR ECUADOR, MISSION CONSENSUS IS THAT A HIGH-LEVEL US EXPRESSION OF CONCERN IS IN ORDER.

THE EMBASSY FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT SUCH AN EXPRESSION MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF A USG STATEMENT REFERRING TO DISQUIETING REPORTS OF MOUNTING ANDEAN TENSIONS, DESPITE THE MODERATING EFFORTS OF REGIONAL LEADERS, AND CAUTIONING AGAINST AN ARMS RACE AND THIRD-PARTY EFFORTS TO INCREASE AREA FRICTION. THE EMBASSY WARNS, HOWEVER, THAT:

--ANY SUCH STATEMENT MUST BE MADE WITH GREAT CARE IN ORDER TO AVOID EXACERBATING TENSIONS BY SPOTLIGHTING THEM.

--THE STATEMENT MUST BE BACKED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF PERUVIAN PERCEPTIONS THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL BE BOTH ANTI-CHILE AND LIKELY TO DEVELOP A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH PERU.

--SOME PERUVIAN OFFICERS SPECULATE THAT THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE US TRANSITION PERIOD MIGHT BE A TIME WHEN PERU COULD PRESENT ITS NEIGHBORS AND THE US WITH AN AGGRESSIVE FAIT ACCOMPLI.

B. ECUADOR: CONCERN THAT ATTACK BY PERU IS IMMINENT

EMBASSY QUITO REPORTS THAT, WHILE THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF
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THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVE THE ECUADORIAN/PERUVIAN BORDER SITUATION IS RETURNING TO NORMAL, MIDDLE AND LOWER LEVEL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERS FEAR AN IMMINENT ATTACK. ECUADORIAN MILITARY OFFICERS REFER TO A REPORT (WHICH THE EMBASSY CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY) REGARDING PERUVIAN TROOP DEPLOYMENTS ALONG THE BORDER, AND SAY THAT THEY EXPECT AN ATTACK ANYTIME FROM TODAY TO THE END OF JANUARY.

THE EMBASSY GIVES VERY LITTLE CREDENCE TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF INVASION OF ECUADOR BY PERU IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.
(SECRET) LIMA 11579, 12/23 (EXDIS) AND (SECRET) LIMA 8907, 12/24.

2. URUGUAY: A SMALL COUNTRY IN THE HORSE LATITUDES

EMBASSY MONTEVIDEO REPORTS THAT URUGUAY'S MILITARY JUNTA IS UNABLE TO FILL THE LEADERSHIP VACUUM LEFT BY ITS OUSTER OF PRESIDENT BORDABERRY LAST JUNE, AND MANY

MILITARY OFFICERS NOW VIEW THAT MOVE AS A MISTAKE.
ALTHOUGH THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO PROSPER ON THE MOMENTUM
OF PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY THE FORMER GOVERNMENT, RULE BY

CONSENSUS IS PROVING INEFFECTIVE AND THE JUNTA IS ALLOWING
THE SHIP OF STATE TO DRIFT. KEY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING
FOREIGN MINISTER BLANCO, HAVE LEFT THE GOVERNMENT, AND
MORE RESIGNATIONS ARE EXPECTED.

IF THE CURRENT SITUATION CONTINUES, PRESSURE FOR FILLING
THE VACUUM MAY INCREASE, EVEN THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO
RUSH TO DATE. AT THE MOMENT THE PRIME CANDIDATE SEEMS TO
BE THE AMBITIOUS AND CAPABLE GENERAL ALVAREZ, WHO COULD,
WHILE REMAINING IN THE BOUNDS OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS,
EXERCISE HIS LEADERSHIP TO ACCELERATE DOMESTIC POLITICAL
LIBERALIZATION. (CONFIDENTIAL) MONTEVIDEO 4928, 12/23.

3. WEST BANKERS MAY OR MAY NOT BE FOR ARAFAT
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MAYOR OF RAMALLAH KHALAF, WHO IS REPORTEDLY THE AUTHOR OF
A DRAFT DECLARATION INTENDED TO DEFINE A COMMON WEST BANK
POSITION AT THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL(PNC), TOLD
CONSULATE GENERAL JERUSALEM THAT:

--THE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS WITHIN THE PLO AND ON
THE WEST BANK ARE STILL SOLIDLY BEHINE ARAFAT.

--HE WAS HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING SOME WEST BANK
MAYORS IN LINE ON THE PROPOSED DECLARATION, DESPITE
THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT WORDING WAS DESIGNED TO
SUPPORT ARAFAT OVER REJECTIONISTS SUCH AS HABASH.

CONSULATE GENERAL COMMENT: KHALAF'S ADMISSION OF DIF-
FICULTIES WITH WEST BANK MAYORS OVER THE TEXT OF THE
STATEMENT INDICATES SOME WANT TO HEDGE THEIR BETS ON
ARAFAT UNTIL THE DUST SETTLES FROM THE DECEMBER 12
CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING IN DAMASCUS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL
USE) JERUSALEM 1757, 12/22 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)
JERUSALEM 1612, 11/23.

4. QUEBEC

A. ESPIONAGE IS, AFTER ALL, A FRENCH WORD

CONSULATE MONTREAL REPORTS THAT AN ARTICLE IN LE DEVOIR
SAYS SEVERAL MINISTERS OF THE PARTI QUEBECOIS (PQ) WILL
ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE PREMIER LEVESQUE OF THE NEED FOR A
PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. LE DEVOIR ALLEGES THIS

MOVE HAS BEEN PROMPTED BY THE POTENTIAL OF INCREASED
ACTIVITY BY FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE
CIA.

CONSULATE COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THAT THIS AND SIMILAR
REPORTS WILL INTENSIFY THE ANXIETIES OF IMMIGRANTS AND
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ANGLOPHONES, MANY OF WHOM SEE RACIST TENDENCIES IN THE
NEW GOVERNMENT AND SUSPECT IT ALREADY HAS BEGUN TO
COLLECT INFORMATION ON NON-FRENCH QUEBECKERS. ALTHOUGH
THESE ANXIETIES SEEM OVERDRAWN, THEY DO REFLECT THE FEAR
THE PQ GOVERNMENT ELICITS IN SOME QUARTERS HERE.

B. SO ARE SOVEREIGNTY, DETENTE,...

CONSULATE QUEBEC REPORTS THAT PREMIER LEVESQUE HAS TOLD
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE TERMS "SEPARATISM" AND
"SEPARATION" HAVE BEEN DROPPED FROM HIS GOVERNMENT'S
VOCABULARY AND REPLACED BY "INDEPENDENCE" AND
"SOVEREIGNTY." "SEPARATISM" HAS BEEN USED AS A SCARE
WORD BY GROUPS OPPOSED TO QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE, AND THE
NEW USAGE IS DESIGNED TO BETTER DESCRIBE THE PQ'S ULTIMATE
GOALS. THE FRENCH EQUIVALENTS FOR THE NEW WORDS, HOWEVER,
ARE QUITE NUANCED AND CAN IMPLY DEGREES OF AUTODETER-
MINATION MUCH LESS DEFINITIVE THAN THE ENGLISH. (LIMITED
OFFICIAL USE) MONTREAL 2017, 12/22 AND (UNCLASSIFIED)
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